

2001 0092
Amend.

AMENDMENTS TO THE AGRICULTURAL ELEMENT
OF THE STANISLAUS COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

On October 20, 1992, the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors adopted the following amendments to the Agricultural Element of the General Plan:

1. Implementation Measure B in the section on URBANIZATION AND THE CONVERSION OF AGRICULTURAL LAND (page 36) was amended to read as follows:

B. Until The term "most productive agricultural areas" is defined on a countywide basis, the term will be defined determined on a case-by-case basis when a proposal is made for the conversion of agricultural land. Factors to be considered include but are not limited to soil types and potential for agricultural production; the availability of irrigation water; ownership and parcelization patterns; uniqueness and flexibility of use; the existence of Williamson Act contracts; existing uses and their contributions to the agricultural sector of the local economy. As an example, some grazing lands, dairy regions and poultry-producing areas as well as farmlands can be considered "most productive agricultural areas." Failure to farm specific parcels will not eliminate them from being considered "most productive agricultural areas." Areas considered to be "most productive agricultural areas" will not include any land within LAFCO-approved spheres of influence of cities or community services districts and sanitary districts serving unincorporated communities. Agricultural lands outside these boundaries and not considered to be "most productive agricultural areas" will be considered "less productive agricultural areas."

2. Implementation Measure D in the section on URBANIZATION AND THE CONVERSION OF AGRICULTURAL LAND (page 36) was amended to read as follows:

D. Current procedures for General Plan amendments will be changed to include the following requirements for evaluating proposed amendments to the General Plan Diagram (map) that would allow the conversion of agricultural land to urban uses:

Conversion Consequences. The direct and indirect effects, as well as the cumulative effects, of the proposed conversion of agricultural land shall be fully evaluated.

Conversion Considerations. In evaluating the consequences of a proposed amendment, the following factors shall be considered: plan designation; soil type; adjacent uses; proposed method of sewage treatment; availability of water, transportation, public utilities, fire and police protection, and other public services; proximity to existing airports and airstrips; impacts on air and water quality, wildlife habitat, endangered species and sensitive lands; and any other factors that may aid the evaluation process.

Conversion Criteria. Proposed amendments to the General Plan Diagram (map) that would allow the conversion of agricultural land to urban uses shall be approved only if the Board of Supervisors makes the following findings:

1. Overall, the proposal is consistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan, and specifically is consistent with Policies 2.4 and 2.5 of this Agricultural Element.
2. There is evidence on the record to show a demonstrated need for the proposed project based on population projections, and past growth rates and other pertinent data.
3. No feasible alternative site exists in areas already designated or planned for the proposed uses.
4. Approval of the proposal will not ~~create development pressure on surrounding agricultural lands~~ constitute part of, or encourage, piecemeal conversion of a larger agricultural area to non-agricultural uses, and will not be growth-inducing (as used in the California Environmental Quality Act).
5. The proposed ~~use~~ project is designed to minimize conflict and will not interfere with agricultural operations on surrounding agricultural lands and will not impact or adversely affect agricultural water supplies.
6. Adequate and necessary public services and infrastructure facilities are available or will be made available as a result of the development.
7. The design of the proposed project has incorporated all reasonable measures, as determined during the CEQA review process, to mitigate impacts to fish and wildlife resources, air quality, water quality and quantity, or other natural resources.

3. Add the following Implementation Measure to the section on EXPANSION OF CITIES AND UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES (pages 38-40):

F. The County will urge LAFCO to strengthen its policies, standards and procedures for evaluating proposed annexations of agricultural land and proposed expansions of service districts or spheres of influence onto agricultural land.

4. Add the following Implementation Measure to the section on ASSESSING AND MITIGATING THE IMPACTS OF FARMLAND CONVERSION (pages 41-43):

D. To facilitate the mitigation of the impacts of farmland conversion, the County--if requested--may make information available on private, non-profit agricultural land trusts, may serve on committees that are formed for the purpose of establishing an agricultural land trust, and may coordinate County mitigation programs with the land trust once it is established.

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